

PASSAGE III

A Farmer's Friend

[1]

Every year, mice, rats and other rodents annually inflict corn crop damage costing in the tens of millions of dollars. Whether **23** it eats the corn while it is growing or once it has been harvested and is in storage, rodents find corn irresistible. To combat these creatures, many farmers set traps or leave out poisons to prevent rodent-related crop losses. **24** In doing so, they may be overlooking an all-natural, safer option: corn snakes.

[2]

The mistaken belief that corn snakes consume corn has, oftentimes, led to farmers unnecessarily killing creatures that, in reality, may be their best friends. The name "corn snake" is actually a bit of misnomer. Corn snakes do not **25** eat corn. Rather, it is widely believed that corn snakes received their name due to one of two **26** factors: the checkered pattern on their undercarriage, which largely resembles Indian corn, or their close proximity to structures that hold corn.

**23**

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) its eating
- C) they eat
- D) it's eating

**24**

If the writer were to delete the preceding sentence, the paragraph would primarily lose:

- A) Details helpful in understanding how rodents typically behave.
- B) Information necessary to understanding how people in agriculture typically deal with rodents.
- C) An opinion regarding the various techniques of rodent extermination employed by farmers.
- D) Commentary regarding the relationship between rodents and crop losses.

**25**

At this point, the writer is considering adding the following:

- contrary to popular belief -

Given that this is true, would this be a relevant addition to make here?

- A) Yes, because it helps to establish the wide misconception people have about corn snakes
- B) Yes, because it clarifies the preferred diet of the corn snake.
- C) No, because the beliefs that people hold about corn snakes are irrelevant to this paragraph.
- D) No, because the amount of corn eaten by corn snakes is irrelevant to this paragraph.

**26**

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) factors: the
- C) factors the
- D) factors, the

[3]

**27** The corn snake diet is primarily composed of mice and, in larger adult snakes, rats. Copperheads, like corn snakes, also feed primarily on mice, but other snakes, such as cottonmouths and water moccasins, prefer to feed on fish and frogs due to the aquatic environments in which they live. **28** Like any creature, corn snakes prefer to live in close proximity to their food supply. Knowing this, it should be no surprise that corn snakes are often seen around farms, which have an abundance of mice. Though they are there to eat pests, **29** many farmers mistakenly see corn snakes as a nuisance and kill them on sight.

[4]

Why do some view corn snakes with such hostility? The reasons are varied, and they tend to be based more on perception than science. First, there is the belief that all snakes are harmful. Some fear corn snakes because of their “poisonous bite,” but corn snakes are not venomous. In fact, they’re constrictors (i.e. they wrap around their prey and

**27**

Which of the following sentences provides the most effective transition from paragraph 2 to paragraph 3?

- A) While it’s true that corn snakes are frequent visitors to corn fields and storage silos, it’s not corn that interests them: it’s the rodents that are interested in the corn that interest them.
- B) The checkered pattern on a corn snake’s belly is white with alternating patches of black.
- C) In fact, corn storage silos can hold upwards of 200 tons of corn.
- D) Knowing this, corn snakes are often misunderstood due to their name.

**28**

The writer is considering deleting the previous sentence. Should it be kept or deleted?

- A) Keep, because it speaks of the corn snake’s diet and places it in the context of what other snakes eat.
- B) Keep, because it adds details relevant to the essays focus on corn snakes’ eating habits.
- C) Delete, because it lacks specific details regarding the diets of various snake species.
- D) Delete, because it is blurs the focus of the essay by introducing a loosely-related detail.

**29**

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) the pests are viewed
- C) corn snakes are seen by many farmers
- D) they are seen

strangle it). Others, **30** who know they are constrictors, fear being strangled by a corn snake, but that, too, is irrational because, unlike the Burmese python, which can grow greater than 20 feet, the average corn snake grows to a length of only 3 – 5 **31** feet thus limiting its diet to creatures no larger than a rat. Corn snakes are not only harmless to humans, but they are also friendly and docile **32** serpents. Because of this friendliness, corn snakes are one of the most popular snakes kept as pets.

[5]

Eating an average of two mice per week, corn snakes should be embraced by farmers, not feared. Even though corn snakes are largely nocturnal and, therefore, largely unseen, spotting a corn snake on a farm should be a point of pleasure for farmers everywhere. Unlike cats, which kill mice but also require feeding and veterinary bills, corn snakes are a cost-effective, all-natural way to control the rodent population and, consequently, protect corn crops from predatory rodents as well. **33**

**30**

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) which know they are constrictors -
- C) whom know they are constrictors
- D) who know they are constrictors -

**31**

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) feet; thus
- C) feet: thus,
- D) feet, thus

**32**

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) serpent's
- C) serpents'
- D) DELETE the underlined portion and end the sentence with a period.

**33**

Suppose the writer had intended to write an essay that argues the position that corn snakes are potentially useful creatures to farmers. Would this essay successfully accomplish the writer's goal?

- A) Yes, because the author argues that corn snakes are effective at performing many farm tasks.
- B) Yes, because the author argues that snakes can fix a problem farmers typically encounter.
- C) No, because the essay focuses too much on mice.
- D) No, because the essay fails to address the dangers posed by corn snakes.